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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Wednesday, October 25, 1939

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "KEEPING WINTER CLOTHES TRIM." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

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Let's talk about clothes today. And let's talk about the woman whose clothes always look trim and new -- the woman every woman wants to be. Let's talk about how she keeps her clothes looking that way.

She does it by knowing the secrets of clothing care. She knows little ways to protect her clothes from soil and wrinkles. And she knows some tricks of cleaning and pressing at home. That's how she makes her clothes wear a long time and still look new. That's how she dresses well on little money.

First, let's consider how she protects her winter clothes. You can learn a lot by keeping your eyes open in any good dress shop. Next time you go into a store selling dresses or coats, notice that every garment hangs on a separate hanger. That keeps it in shape and avoids wrinkles. And notice the hangers. They're usually either smooth wood or covered with cloth. The shop wouldn't risk rough hangers that might tear the clothes, or metal hangers that might leave rust-stains. Notice, too, that most shops provide a cloth-cover for the shoulders of every dress. Dust is most likely to collect on the shoulders of a dress as it hangs. For the very expensive fragile dresses, the shop usually provides a long dress cover. This protects against fading as well as soil. Notice that all dresses and coats in shops hang in cabinets with doors that close tight. And notice how clean and well-aired those cabinets are. No close air, no cooking odors, no dust or moths get in to damage those dresses. You can use the same care in looking after your clothes at home. So much for protecting winter clothes.



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Now about cleaning them. Many of the most popular fabrics this fall will wash successfully -- if you know how. The new cotton velvets, velveteens, corduroys and chenilles are examples. The trick in washing these fabrics is never to crush or mash them, and to brush them just before they're dry. Never rub, squeeze or wring a velvet fabric. Make a thick suds of mild soap in lukewarm water. Put in the garment and then wash it by alternate lifting out and dipping in the suds. If the fabric is very soiled, make a new suds and repeat the dipping and lifting. Rinse in lukewarm water also by dipping and lifting. Change the water until all the soap has disappeared. Instead of wringing the garment dry, lay it between bathtowels to remove the dripping water, or if the fabric is thin and delicate, shake it until almost dry.

By the way, better hold the inside of the fabric as you shake so not to mash the velvet. Shake with an up-and-down motion. Then hang the garment on a wooden hanger to dry where you have a good circulation of air. Just before it is dry, brush with a medium-stiff brush. As you brush follow the natural "lie" of the velvet.

Many of the new winter rayon fabrics will wash, too. Some of them have labels that guarantee washability and give washing directions. If the material is not guaranteed washable, better try washing a sample before you put the whole dress in the tub. Make sure the color doesn't run, and the fabric doesn't shrink or stretch. The two chief points to remember in washing rayons are to use warm but not hot water and to handle rayon gently when it's wet.

Some wool fabrics wash very easily. The flannels made of part wool and part cotton, so popular for children's clothes, are well-known for their washability. And that dainty thin wool fabric, challis, also washes with no trouble. But most other wools need considerable care to keep them from shrinking or matting. The secrets of washing wool are to use lukewarm water for washing and rinsing;



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to use mild, thick soapsuds -- never a cake of soap rubbed on; and to dry in "lukewarm air" -- that is, dry where it's neither very hot nor very cold. Extremes of heat or cold shrink wool. And once it's shrunk, you can't do anything about it.

Now a few pressing pointers. To press wool fabrics, you need to use a medium hot iron and pressing cloths. Use a heavy damp cloth for thick wools, and a damp cheesecloth for thin wools. Underneath the damp cloth use a dry cloth. Silks press best under tissue paper. Here again take care not to use too hot an iron. And when you're pressing rayon, the temperature of the iron is most important. Too hot an iron will stick, or "shine", or even melt rayon. Too cool an iron won't take out the wrinkles. You have to find the in-between ideal heat by experimenting.

A new steam iron on the market is especially good for pressing rayons and steaming velvet. This iron holds water and lets out steam from tiny holes in the bottom of the iron. If you lay velvet on the ironing board with the velvet side down, and hold the iron close to the fabric, you can steam it successfully. Other ways of steaming velvet at home are to hang the garment over a steaming kettle, or in a shower-bath filled with steam, or to pass the fabric over a hot iron covered with moist cloth. But all these methods have their difficulties. The chief difficulty is to keep the moist velvet from touching anything. If it even touches the wall during steaming, it will mash and spot.

Well, these are just a few of the secrets of caring for winter clothes so you'll be the lady whose clothes always look trim, smart, and new.

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